

# **1999 Status Report**

## **To the Governor and the General Assembly**

### **The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education**

#### ***Reform of Postsecondary Education***

##### **The Action Agenda**

Building on the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act and *2020 Vision*, the Council approved the next step in changing and improving postsecondary education in Kentucky: an Action Agenda, developed by the Council and colleges and universities, laying out what they and Kentucky will do during the next four years to bring the Commonwealth closer to achieving its goals for 2020. A key feature: projected increases in enrollment, retention, and graduation rates needed to move Kentucky toward national averages. In shaping the Action Agenda, the Council and its staff solicited proposals and reactions from a broad range of Kentuckians through a wide variety of methods: statewide teleconference, KET call-in show, discussions with campus administrators and faculty senate leaders, in-depth telephone interviews with legislators, teachers, principals, and superintendents, and focus groups of students, alumni, parents, and employers. Comment on the Action Agenda also was sought from business and civic leaders.

##### **Kentucky Community and Technical College System**

In its second full year, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System increased enrollment by nearly 3 percent to 46,716 students, full and part time. The KCTCS enrolled about 82,000 students in noncredit continuing education classes and in customized training for business and industry. The KCTCS also enrolled about 60,000 students in noncredit training for fire and rescue services, and 1,500 students in academic and technical programs in correctional institutions. The KCTCS Board of Regents and President Michael B. McCall continued to support consolidation at community and technical colleges where local citizens and civic and business leaders sought those changes. The Council on Postsecondary Education approved nearly a dozen new academic programs and allowed the KCTCS to approve most future programs. The KCTCS created administrative processes to link its 28 colleges on 50 campuses, installing a systemwide computer network that drew national notice. The Council has approved all five regional postsecondary education centers, and the KCTCS is working with the comprehensive universities to develop them. The centers and locations are Southeast (London, Corbin, Somerset), Northeast (Prestonsburg), South (Glasgow), Central (Elizabethtown), and West (Hopkinsville).

### **Kentucky Commonwealth Virtual University**

In apparently the most successful startup of a consortium cyber university, the KCVU enrolled 235 students – many taking more than one course – for its first term, fall 1999. Some two dozen courses in nine pilot programs were offered. They ranged from nursing to office management to firefighter certification. Enrollment will more than quadruple for the spring 2000 term, when some 150 courses will be available. The KCVU filled its top three positions – chief executive, academic, and student services officers – along with others, including marketing director and staffing of its Call Center. The KCVU teamed with the Kentucky Department of Education to create the Kentucky Virtual High School, the most ambitious undertaking of its kind in the country. The KVHS will begin offering courses, including foreign languages, for the spring 2000 term.

### **Kentucky Commonwealth Virtual Library**

The KCVL rolled out an expanding array of databases – including full text of thousands of journals, magazines, and newspapers as well as indexes and abstracts – that all Kentuckians can access at home, at work, and at libraries across the Commonwealth. Besides building an all-purpose Website, KCVL designed an online tutorial to help its users, including KCVU students, learn how to search for information and evaluate it. The virtual library implemented a common library system for public institutions so users can more easily determine what libraries have in their collections and order documents on loan. The KCVL also is working with libraries to put their Kentuckiana collections online.

### **Changes in Base Funding for Public Postsecondary Education**

House Bill 1 eliminated the enrollment-driven funding formula and called for the Council to develop a new approach. Working with the colleges and universities, the Governor's office, and legislative staff, the Council selected new, national benchmark institutions for each university and the KCTCS. With those benchmarks as a gauge, funding – beginning with the next biennium – will be based on an analysis of state general fund and tuition and fees revenue per full-time-equivalent student compared to that of similar institutions nationwide.

### **Incentive Trust Funds: Endowment**

Thus far in the current biennium, more than \$105 million of the \$110 million available to the institutions in public dollars for endowed positions has been matched by private fundraising. Fellowships, professorships, and more than 80 endowed chairs have been established through the Research Challenge Trust Fund. The University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville have matched their shares of the total of \$100 million reserved for them. UK and UofL are using the money to expand and improve targeted programs. Western Kentucky University has matched and Eastern Kentucky University has almost matched their portions of the \$10 million set aside for comprehensive universities. Northern Kentucky University says it has matched its allocation.

**Incentive Trust Funds: Regional Excellence, Workforce Development**

NKU, Morehead State University, and Kentucky State University won Council approval to fund their programs of distinction from the Regional University Excellence Trust Fund. (Programs at WKU, ECU, and Murray State University were approved in 1998.) Based on appropriations for the three years beginning in 1997, Morehead may receive up to \$2.6 million for its Institute for Regional Analysis and Public Policy, NKU received \$2.2 million for its Center for Integrative Natural Science and Mathematics, and KSU received \$1.2 million for its Aquaculture Program. The Council approved a \$12-million proposal by the KCTCS for use of the Postsecondary Workforce Development Trust Fund for the two-year period ending in June 2000. The Council staff is reviewing the programs of distinction and the programs supported by the Research Challenge Trust Fund and will report on them to the Council in January 2000.

**The Need for Space – and the Use of Space – at Colleges and Universities**

The Council approved guidelines and standards for creation and use of space – measures to evaluate the need for new or renovated space at public colleges and universities. The Council contracted with Paulien & Associates Inc. and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems to develop guidelines and standards following their nationwide review of space-planning practices. The conclusion: Kentucky's public institutions generally have enough space for now, though some need more in selected categories such as research labs. Average weekly use of classrooms, teaching labs, and the seats, desks, and stations in them in fall 1998 was below the standards the Council has adopted. Classrooms were used 24.9 hours (standard: 36) at 56.7 percent occupancy per session (standard: 67 percent). Teaching labs were used 15.5 hours (standard: 23) at 72.6 percent occupancy per session (standard: 80 percent).

**New Academic Programs – and New Ways To Approve Them**

The Council approved nearly two dozen academic programs including associate degrees in Network and Information Systems Technology (Kentucky Advanced Technology Institute, Paducah Community College, and Somerset Community College); bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education (WKU), Computer Electronic Networking (EKU), and Environmental Science and Studies (NKU); a master's degree in Computer Science (NKU), and doctorates in mechanical and electrical engineering (UofL). The Council adopted program approval policies that are in line with reform goals, reflect international best practices, and strengthen partnerships between the Council and governing boards. As a first step, in April 1999, the Council delegated to the KCTCS Board of Regents authority for approving programs in the following areas: certificate, diploma, and associates in arts, science, applied science, and applied technology.

**Stronger Minimum Admissions Requirements**

Reflecting new minimum high school graduation requirements, the Pre-College Curriculum – courses that students must take to be admitted unconditionally to Kentucky public universities – has been strengthened. The revised PCC, most of which applies to students who seek to enter four-year degree programs beginning in 2002, includes one

more credit each in social studies and science, two credits in foreign language (effective 2004), one in arts appreciation, and half credits in health and physical education.

### **Systemwide Assessment and Placement (Remedial Courses)**

In November, the Council approved a policy establishing a minimum standard for placing students in appropriate levels of courses in English, math, and reading. The policy emphasizes placement based on what a student knows – not just the completion of certain courses in high school. It reflects comment by the institutions' chief academic officers and Kentucky Department of Education staff.

### **P-16 Council**

The Council on Postsecondary Education and the State Board of Education created the P-16 Council (preschool through undergraduate), composed of three members each of the Board and the Council, along with the Commissioner of Education and the Council President. Advancing both KERA and House Bill 1, the P-16 Council is focusing on the preparation and professional development of teachers, and on defining what is expected of students graduating from high school and entering colleges and universities. Projects that the Council and the Board have undertaken with the P-16 Council include middle school math and science teacher academies, incentive funds for the creation of model schools to prepare teachers, and a communications campaign to persuade more Kentuckians to go to college.

### **Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarships (KEES)**

The first students to benefit from the program – merit scholarships based on grades and standardized test scores – entered college in fall 1999. An estimated 14,000 students will receive payments during the 1999-2000 year totaling about \$6 million.

## ***Our System: Profile and Performance***

- Kentucky's system of public postsecondary education is composed of eight public universities (six comprehensive and two research), Lexington Community College, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (13 community colleges, 15 technical colleges, and a total of 50 campuses), and the Kentucky Commonwealth Virtual University. Several community and technical colleges have either consolidated their operations or are discussing plans to do so. Twenty independent colleges and universities also provide postsecondary education.
- Of Kentucky's 120 counties, 112 contain a postsecondary institution or are adjacent to a county with a postsecondary institution.
- More than 136,000 undergraduates are enrolled at state-supported postsecondary colleges and universities in Kentucky.

- Four in five university undergraduates are full-time students. About half of the students at the community colleges and technical colleges attend classes full-time.
- One in four university undergraduates is 25 years of age or older. Nearly half of the community college population is of nontraditional age.
- Kentucky ranks 46th in the nation in the percentage of its adult population with a high school diploma.
- Only 53 percent of Kentucky's 1997 high school graduates attended college during the fall semester following their graduation. The U.S. college-going rate for the class of 1997 was 67 percent. Based on projections by the Rand Corp., Kentucky's postsecondary education system must have 80,000 more undergraduate students by 2020 to reach the national average for college going.
- Kentucky ranks 42nd in the percentage of adults who have earned a bachelor's degree.

### ***Gauging Quality: What the Customers Think***

- Focus groups conducted around Kentucky by an independent consulting firm in 1999 found that nearly all participants – students, alumni, parents, and employers – valued highly the role of postsecondary education in preparing and placing students in good jobs.
- Focus group participants said that postsecondary education must furnish students with a solid foundation in the basics of an academic discipline, ability to write and speak well, ethics for personal lives and the work place, critical thinking and problem-solving, adaptability to diversity, computer technology skills, self-discipline and independence, and teamwork and leadership.
- Participants perceived Kentucky postsecondary education's strengths as providing students with good computer skills and the fundamentals of a chosen discipline taught by knowledgeable faculty.
- Focus group participants felt that postsecondary education's major shortcomings were lack of adequate career counseling, unresponsive and inaccurate academic advising, failure to help students apply theories to real-world problems, and a tendency not to teach students the "people skills" needed to succeed.

### ***Ensuring Quality: What Are Teachers Learning?***

- All of the universities and colleges that prepare teachers have implemented performance-based programs that measure development of students' competencies.
- Every teacher preparation program has submitted a continuous-assessment plan providing for feedback to students and use of performance data to improve programs.

### ***Student Progress***

- **Remedial Courses.** In fall 1996, 17,395 students enrolled in remedial math and 5,521 in remedial English. Community colleges enrolled 63 percent of remedial math students and 54 percent of remedial English students. Overall undergraduate enrollment fell at universities from fall 1992 to fall 1996, and so did remedial enrollments: math down 3 percent (from 6,664 to 6,448) and English down 7 percent (2,722 to 2,542). Overall community-college enrollment also was down, but enrollments in remedial math rose 8 percent (from 10,149 to 10,947) and in remedial English, 27 percent (2,340 to 2,979). Of the university students who passed remedial courses and took entry-level courses within two years, 59 percent had a C or better in entry-level math, and 77 percent passed entry-level English. At community colleges, 67 percent of students who took remedial courses passed entry-level math, and 68 percent passed entry-level English. Some comparisons from year to year may be inexact; institutions change requirements for remedial education from time to time.
- **Retention.** In 1998, the percentage of first-time freshmen returning for a second year at Kentucky's eight public universities ranged from 57 percent to 80 percent. ACT Inc. reported that 72 percent of students attending public four-year institutions and 74 percent of students attending all four-year institutions returned for a second year. The one-year retention rate at the KCTCS was 53 percent. ACT reports that 55 percent of students attending two-year institutions returned for a second year.
- **Transfer.** In fall 1998, 2,418 community college students transferred to one of the eight public universities after having earned 12 or more credit hours. From fall 1994 to fall 1998, the number of community college students who transferred with 12 or more credit hours grew by 4.7 percent.
- **Graduation.** In 1999, the percentage of first-time, full-time baccalaureate students who graduated within six years ranged from 17.7 percent to 50.8 percent at the eight public universities. The average is 36.7 percent. Nationwide, ACT Inc. reported that for 1998, 42.9 percent of students attending public four-year institutions and 52.1 percent of students attending all four-year institutions graduated within *five* years. The four-year graduation rate for community college students who transferred with 12 or more credit hours was 47.6 percent.

## ***Research***

- Research and development expenditures rose 57 percent from fiscal year 1994 (\$132.2 million) to fiscal year 1998 (\$207.2 million). The overall rate of inflation over this five-year period was just under 10 percent.
- Compared with the 1996-97 fiscal year, the University of Kentucky, which aspires to be in the top 20 of nationally ranked public research institutions, increased its research and development spending by 29 percent in the 1997-98 fiscal year. The University of Louisville, which aims to become a nationally recognized metropolitan research university, increased its research and development expenditures by 17 percent in that time period. These data were reported by the institutions to the National Science Foundation.

## ***Equal Opportunities***

- *The Kentucky Plan 1997-2002* is the third stage of desegregation and equal opportunity planning that began in 1982. The plan requires tracking of minorities in undergraduate and graduate enrollments, retention of freshmen and all undergraduates, bachelor's degrees conferred, and employment of faculty and staff. Kentucky lags notably in graduating resident African Americans (28.8 percent versus 45.7 percent for whites: the six-year rate for those who first enrolled in 1992) and in enrolling resident African Americans in graduate and professional programs.
- An institution's eligibility to submit proposals for new academic programs is tied to its progress toward achieving equal-opportunity objectives. About half of the universities and about a third of the community colleges could seek approval of new programs in 1999 without asking for a waiver of sanctions. Four community colleges were not eligible for waivers.